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Wildlife Conservation Board Receives Top National Award for Conservation Leadership

Sacramento – The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service today presented the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) with the Great Blue Heron Award, its highest honor for habitat conservation. The award recognizes participants in the North American Waterfowl Management Plan for work that has significantly benefited waterfowl and migratory birds. The WCB received the award during its quarterly meeting in Sacramento.

“The Wildlife Conservation Board is a tremendous force for supporting conservation projects throughout California, and it’s wonderful to see the board’s tireless efforts receive national recognition,” said Secretary for Resources Mike Chrisman. “This impressive award shows that California’s conservation work serves as a national model.”

The WCB, part of the California Resources Agency, was established nearly 60 years ago to administer a capital outlay program for wildlife habitat protection. In the last five years, the WCB has worked with more than 275 partners who have contributed \$1 billion to the conservation of California’s natural beauty and biodiversity.

“We’re honored to receive such prestigious recognition,” said WCB Executive Director Al Wright. “More than just an appreciation of the efforts of the board and its staff, this award is about acknowledging a collective movement by the people of California toward protecting and restoring our natural heritage. This work has been accomplished through partnerships representing thousands of people who value the state’s natural resources and special places.”

The WCB and its partners have accomplished hundreds of successful habitat restoration and land conservation projects throughout California. These endeavors have increased wetlands in the Central Valley by more than 70,000 acres since 1990. In the last decade, the WCB’s partnerships have protected 63,000 acres of San Francisco Bay wetlands, and restored 61,850 acres of the bay’s wetlands and riparian habitats. Since 2001, the projects have also protected 300,000 acres of rangelands and oak woodlands, 90,000 acres of forest lands, 23,000 acres of vernal pools and 9,000 acres of riparian habitat.

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